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ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Center for Business, Community and Family Partnerships

1996 *Annual Report*

ILLINOIS DOCUMENTS

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**ILLINOIS
ADULT EDUCATION
AND LITERACY**

PURPOSE OF ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education programs funded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) serve adults ages 16 years and older who have less than a high school education and are no longer enrolled in school.

Because those who need basic education the most are usually the ones who can least afford it, the State Board funds free or low-cost adult education programs that encourage eligible adults to reach one or more of the following goals to help them learn to function more effectively in society and the workplace:

- Acquire basic reading, writing, and math skills necessary to get or advance in a job.
- Meet entrance requirements for vocational training programs.
- Prepare for the GED, a nationally recognized test for a certificate of high school equivalency.
- Attain high-level employment skills.
- Obtain the skills necessary to become a better parent.
- Acquire the skills needed to be a functional, contributing member of society and a wiser consumer.
- Learn English as a second language and citizenship skills.
- Earn high school credit toward a high school diploma.
- Obtain an alternative high school diploma.

The Illinois Adult Education Program is governed by the Illinois School Code and the Federal Adult Education Act. By law, any potential provider of adult education and literacy services (e.g., public school, community college, regional office of education, public or private nonprofit organization, community-based organization, correctional education agency, or post-secondary education institution) must be a member of a local Area Planning Council. Across Illinois, 41 councils develop and coordinate educational programs.

Each year, Area Planning Councils must submit plans to ISBE on or before March 1. If the area plan is approved, all providers listed in the plan can apply for funding from ISBE.

STATE REIMBURSEMENT

Reimbursement is based on (1) the formula mandated in the School Code for the maximum reimbursement per instructional unit (defined as 15 hours of direct instruction), (2) the approved budget, (3) actual costs and (4) the terms of distribution based on service levels as annually negotiated with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). If expenditures and student hours are sufficient, districts can claim their total approved budgets.

For Fiscal Year (FY) 1996, the formula provided the following:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE) (0-8.9 reading level)–\$49.15 per unit of instruction
- Adult Secondary Education (ASE) (9.0-12.0 reading level)–\$44.24 per unit of instruction (ASE is reimbursed at 90% of ABE rate)
- Vocational skills training–\$61.44 per unit of instruction

The formula for community colleges is similar, except that colleges must deduct the state funding for ABE/ASE received through the College Board. For FY96 that rate was \$11.44 per instructional unit.

Adult education instructional program providers must apply for approval from the State Board. Each application is evaluated by a team of staff members from the State Board of Education, the Community College Board, and the Illinois Department of Public Aid. Approval is based on the following criteria:

- service to target populations;
- quantifiable need in the service area;
- access to a diversity of services;

- use of effective and diverse instructional techniques;
- provision of supportive services;
- coordination with other funding sources and service providers; and
- past performance, particularly in relation to student recruitment, retention, and learning gains.

based on service levels in the preceding years.

SUMMARY OF NEEDS AND PROGRAMS

Adult education and literacy programs provide instruction in the following areas: adult basic education, literacy, and adult secondary education (the latter including GED exam preparation, high school credit courses) and vocational training for entry-level employment. Other areas covered are life-coping skills, parenting skills, citizenship training for immigrants, English as a second language, job-seeking skills, and classes to prepare public assistance recipients for employment.

SAVINGS THROUGH PUBLIC ASSISTANCE REDUCTIONS

Under an inter-agency agreement with the Department of Public Aid, the State Board provides special recruitment, retention and adult education services to students receiving public assistance, primarily Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients. During FY96, 17,663 public assistance students attended adult education classes meeting the minimum requirement of hours to be claimed for reimbursement. Of these students, 3,635 (20.5%) increased their earnings enough to reduce or cancel their monthly cash grants. The annual welfare savings is estimated at \$26 million, which amounts to a savings of \$2.65 for every \$1.00 of assistance from the state.

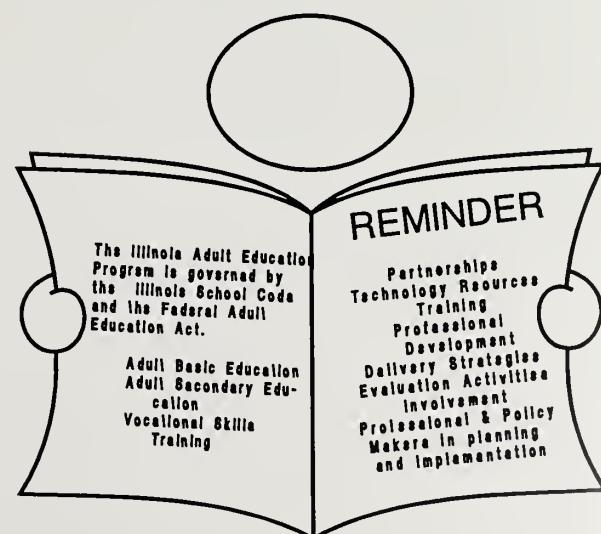
Total savings will increase as the state's medical assistance costs lower, and the tax revenue from the incomes of these former participants continue to grow.

In FY96 the State Board funded 105 administrative agencies to provide adult education. These providers served 108,597 students at over 600 sites for a total of 864,516 units of instruction:

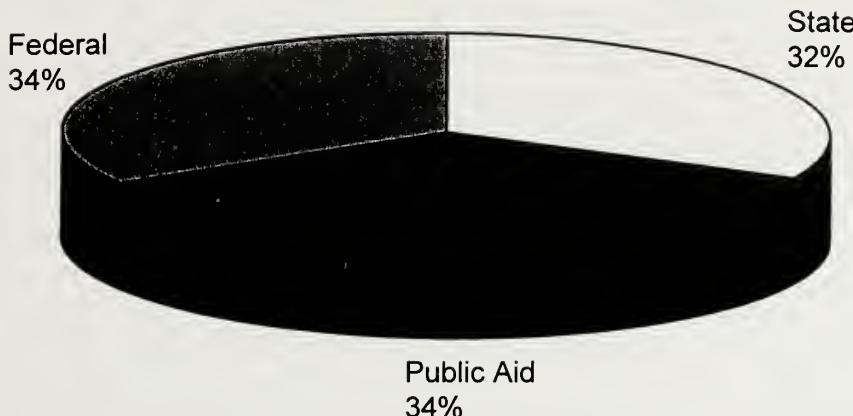
Instruction	Units
ABE	260,008
ESL	434,232
H.S. Credit	40,786
GED Review	99,728
Vocational	29,762
Total	864,516

ALLOCATED FUNDS FOR FY96 BY SOURCE

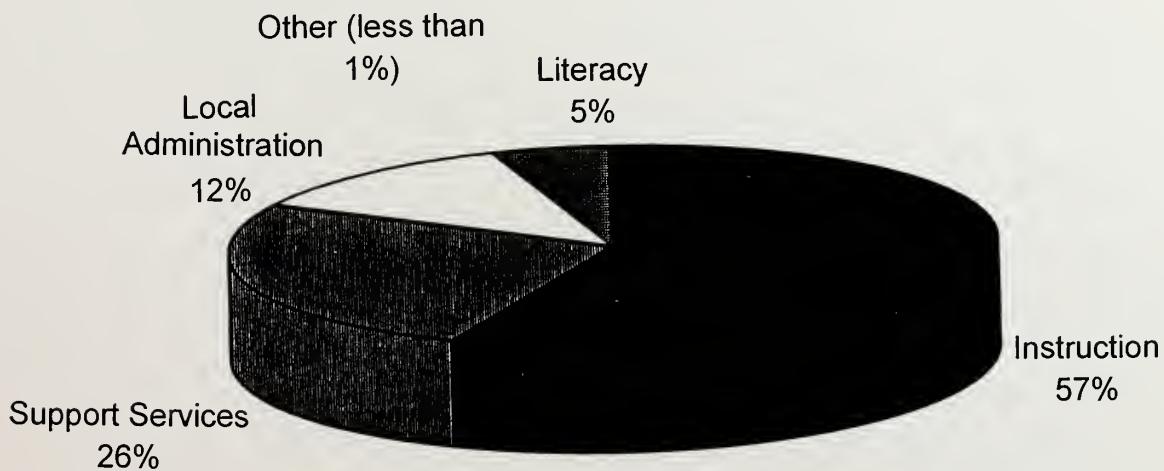
FUND TYPE	\$ AMOUNT
Federal	10,498,723
State GRF	7,277,200
Public Assistance	10,398,017
State Match	1,659,900
Total	29,833,840



Fiscal Year 1996 Funding Sources



Fiscal Year 1996 Funding by Purpose (All Funds)



Student Demographics

ETHNICITY	SEX	16-20	21-24	25-44	45-59	60+	TOTAL
Asian/Pacific Islander	M	287	319	1,147	427	301	2,481
	F	264	403	2,525	811	365	4,368
Native American	M	49	36	85	17	4	191
	F	51	29	97	19	3	199
Black	M	3,298	1,375	3,102	548	141	8,464
	F	3,979	1,890	5,112	827	217	12,025
Hispanic	M	4,925	5,413	10,146	1,122	238	21,844
	F	3,912	4,119	10,884	1,712	315	20,942
White	M	5,518	1,735	5,073	1,665	1,002	14,993
	F	5,579	2,618	9,765	3,159	1,769	22,890
COLUMN TOTALS	All	27,862	17,937	47,936	10,307	4,355	108,397
GENDER TOTALS	M	14,077	8,878	19,553	3,779	1,686	47,973
	F	13,785	9,059	28,383	6,528	2,669	60,424

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ACCESS:

Issue: New legislation in 1996 calling for program funding based on performance outcomes and service levels may result in certain Illinois geographic or demographic segments not having access to full services.

Recommendations: Identify and use a system of indicators which balance literacy needs with available services.

PERFORMANCE:

Issue: The 1996 adult education legislation requires that a significant portion of state adult education funds be awarded based on performance. While performance indicators must reflect and preserve the diversity of Illinois' adult education system, they must be consistent so that progress is reliably reported.

Recommendation: A partnership of state and local stakeholders should identify appropriate outcome measures. Data collection systems must be developed, installed and used consistently by every local provider trained in its use so that data is reliable, consistent and valid. Adequate time needs to be allowed for the reported outcomes to be meaningful. These indicators will also help identify who needs capacity-building.

TECHNOLOGY:

The number of adults needing service is too great and existing resources too small to reach everyone through the traditional classroom. Technology can be used to reach new and underserved groups of adults, deliver effective instruction, and streamline program management and communications systems. Interactive software that encourages critical thinking and

allows for group learning is urgently needed.

Recommendation: Foster public/private partnerships to develop technology resources, training and professional development activities, delivery strategies and evaluation activities.

SYSTEM BUILDING:

Issue: Adult education and literacy are critical to Illinois' employment and training agenda and the state's education-to-careers initiative. Adult educators are knowledgeable about working with "all" learners to draw on their diverse learning styles and needs, providing training in nontraditional environments and using instructional materials that are relevant to adults entering or re-entering the workforce.

Recommendation: The integrity of adult education and literacy under any new proposed federal or state legislation can be assured by meaningfully involving education professionals and policy makers in planning and implementation.



